

THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER

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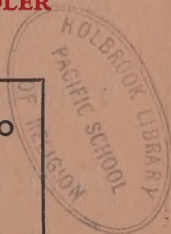
THE WEST
IN ASIA

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REITH OF THE B.B.C.

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A NEW COMMUNITY

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THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE
COMMON LIFE

Vol. I. No. 9.

SEPTEMBER 1950

Notes of the Month

PRESIDENT TRUMAN, in his Messages to Congress and the nation just after America's intervention in Korea, justified the action as a "police operation" on behalf of the United Nations; and in that sense, we believe, most of the American and British public have accepted the situation. Never can a great nation and its allies have entered upon a war with such promptitude and so little enthusiasm. The American Congress, two hours after hearing the President's speech, quietly voted almost unlimited billions for re-armament with but a single contrary vote (surely a record in democratic history); and the British Parliament soon afterwards assumed a relatively equal burden with almost as unanimous a resignation. These did not look at all like the "war-mongers" who are supposed by Communist propagandists to control the policies of the Western world. They seemed more like men taking up a load that they had lately put down with infinite relief, now shouldering it again with reluctance and vexation but with no lack of determination. Such was and still is the mood, and, although everyone must or should know that "police operation" is a very imperfect analogy for what is happening in the Far East, the governments of the fifty nations supporting America's initiative can show ample reason for believing

that their cause is just, that an act of aggression has been committed, and that they are morally bound to resist it in the name of public right and international law. It is really impossible to question this, except on the pessimistic ground that an admittedly imperfect state of the law makes it useless to try to defend or improve it; or on the more cynical assumption that there can never be such a thing as relations of right and justice between the nations. Neither objection can be allowed by Christian men, and it is not surprising that the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, which happened to be meeting at Toronto, issued the statement which has since been widely publicised.¹ This began with a clear commendation of the American action in Korea.

Moral Authority and Military Action

It is a strange and somewhat awful portent, but no army since the time of the Crusades can have gone into action with banners blessed by so many leaders of Christian opinion. President Truman is said to have refused, wisely enough, to countenance a proposal that would have tried officially to associate both the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church with this action of the American Government. But since the 156 member Churches of the World Council are presumably behind the commendation mentioned above, and the approval of the overwhelming weight of Roman Catholic opinion was never in doubt, the moral authority which it would have been invidious to claim or to confer has already attached itself to the first warlike enterprise of the United Nations. We should take care to see what this means, and even more what it does not mean. A consensus of Christian opinion in support of an act of defensive war is far from representing any approval of war as an institution, nor could it sanction unlimited violence in the most justifiable case. This limitation is clearly recognized in the Report of the Toronto Conference,

¹ See *Interim*, p. 335.

and it would be in any statement on the subject that could be agreed upon by a representative body of persons educated in Christian thought and action. Extremities of violence, such as the use of atomic and other exterminative weapons, were unreservedly condemned at Toronto, and so was the "obliteration bombing" which played a notorious part in the last great war. Moreover, in a resolution stating that "the conscientious decisions of Christians with regard to participation or non-participation in war are to be respected", all governments are urged to make legal provision for conscientious objectors under their jurisdiction.

The Secret of Strength

To make war with moral and Christian reservations may be illogical. It is arguable, it is even plainly true that if a people allows its quarrel with another to go to the length of war, and then sets limits to the degree of violence it will use, it gives advantage to an enemy who has no such scruple; a lesser violence is liable to be beaten by a greater. How else did this Western civilization of ours (which we are in danger of worshipping as an idol) so easily dominate the peoples of four continents, except by possessing, among other inventions, novel methods of violence that it did not hesitate to employ? Yet if we ask how this civilization acquired its superior force and strength, it was certainly not by a greater trust in force nor readiness to use it, but to something very different. The Western societies prospered under a culture and politics which set men peculiarly free to think and experiment as individuals, while fostering an intellectual co-operation between them which endured, despite political and national conflict, from generation to generation. No other culture can have given men such encouragement to action, combined with so much stimulus to self-criticism. Power came to the West after it had been educated, for a millenium and a half, in doctrines of God and man which ascribed the utmost significance to every

individual, but also made men constantly aware of their unreliability and moral frailty. This produced an atmosphere at least unfavourable to self-righteousness in rulers, frequently making them yield to authorities above or recognize rights below them. And according to Mr. Christopher Dawson, if we rightly understand his recent works, it was also a hidden source of the energy and insight with which Western man has been able to grapple with the forces of nature and change the material conditions of life all over the globe. The external strength of the culture of the West is connected with a realization of man's inner weakness.

Nationalism in the East

The Toronto statement on the Korean war attempts—perhaps not very convincingly—to set limits to the force which the United Nations are morally justified in using. It is the political authority, in the last resort the military, which would have to decide questions about their use of weapons. The most we can expect is that they will never be the first to employ exterminative methods, and that they will continue to recognize the right of conscientious objection to combatant service. One cannot imagine the Western nations going down in defeat for want of the means to meet any force with force, nor from a sacrificial refusal to use it; but it becomes steadily harder for them to maintain their lead. Their powerful civilization has, by its very nature, been obliged to pass on its powers to other nations and to equip them for competition in the same ways of peace or war. The West has showered its inventions and techniques, its organization and education upon every nation that would take them; and none have had either the will and the ability to refuse these things, unless we except Tibet. This has altered the whole world and the position of the Western nations in it, especially as one of the gifts they distribute is a political nationalism like their own. Everywhere in the East, and to a lesser extent in the tropical South, the old social orders are giving place to nationalistic movements;

everywhere native leaders appear who want to take control, and set their people against the Western administrators, merchants, overseers, and teachers who have initiated them into the new way of life. Eagerly as most of these movements seek to avail themselves of what Western man has brought into their lives, they also wish to get rid of him personally, or at least to reduce him to the position of a mere foreigner and no more. All this is very natural and human: what is unnatural and formidable in the situation is that these incipient nations look increasingly towards the great Communist power to promote their aims. In Asia, where such new national movements are the furthest advanced and where the position of the West in several countries might easily become untenable, the United Nations have had to take defensive action. Not to have done so would have been to risk losing all their remaining centres of direct influence in the East. But very few, if any, Asiatics see this action in the light of a police operation.

The "Predominant Spiritual Current"

Upon this point Dr. Emil Brunner's account of his Asiatic tour¹ is instructive. He sees very clearly the spiritual dilemma of these peoples who have learned technical things from the West with as much avidity as these have been taught or imposed upon them, but have had no training to speak of in the ways of life which can produce such techniques or cope with their effects. One thing that we can hardly over-emphasize, says Dr. Brunner, is that "Despite the impressive achievements of Christian Missions, the influence of Christianity in Asia is minimal. Whereas Christianity achieved the remarkable unity of the West, Asia has taken over from the West mainly the exterior civilization only, not Christianity itself". He was especially impressed by the immense diversity of human ways in Asia

¹ *Impressions of a Trip through Asia*. Article by Emil Brunner in the bi-weekly journal, *Christianity and Crisis*, 537 West 121st Street, New York 27, N.Y.

and noted that the cultural leaders of its countries are well aware of the need for some unifying force. They know that this cannot be found in the word "Asia" which was never more than a geographical expression. Many of them turn or return to the venerable literatures and the historic religions of the continent. In India the revival of Hinduism since the withdrawal of the British is indeed much more than an archaistic movement, for the Hindu cults still have their ancient roots in the eternal peasantry. But no traditional faith of the Orient offers any inspiration for a new way of life that could either absorb the impact of mechanization upon a society or resist its inroads from outside. Nor do Asiatics want to resist it. Nowhere do the rising classes, who are the educated minority, take any real interest in these movements of return to their own spiritual traditions; everywhere they incline to what may be called a pseudo-religion of secularism. It is a cult without worship, ritual or sacrifice, but it affords a fairly consistent theory and practice of life. As Dr. Brunner says, "Technical progress and experimental natural science, positivist philosophy and psychology, indifference towards anything religious, and ethical relativism—this is apparently the predominant spiritual current among Japanese youth." This describes pretty exactly the mental climate in which communist politics flourish. No doubt there are many spiritual cross-currents in Asia as elsewhere. There are, for instance, prominent Asiatic scientists who are as wide awake as any in the West to the danger that political communism holds for science itself. The desire of the Eastern intelligentsia for technical education and equipment also represents legitimate and healthy aspirations which the West should never deprecate. The depth of this desire in Asia was shown when the Americans bombed the great chemical works in North Korea, arousing unexpected bitterness and dismay everywhere amongst Eastern intellectuals, even in those friendly to what they understand of UNO. The few great industrial plants in the Far East are regarded by them with feelings

that transcend politics. (The World Council of Churches pronouncement at Toronto would have earned important gratitude in Asia if it had made a suitable comment on this dubious act of war.) But with the utmost sympathy for these technological ambitions, their stark predominance in the thought of the classes rising to power is a portent of tremendous menace.

A Terrible Indictment

As long as Europe maintained its political ascendancy in the East, we could maintain our hope that the Eastern peoples might be educated up to modern economic and political autonomy, incorporating the Western techniques under the safeguarding influence of deeper disciplines—those of juridical rights, democratic politics and national loyalties. It was these that enabled the West to adopt technological economy without too great or rapid a sacrifice of human and spiritual values, and might do the same in Asia, we thought, provided there were time for a sufficient infusion of the Christian spirit through the missionary labours of the Christian churches. But many contrary developments, as Dr. Brunner remarks, have made “the methods hitherto applied to bring the Gospel to the Asiatic nations no longer correspond to the actual situation”. And meanwhile, a more serious disability has grown upon us. For very many of the most active representatives of the West in Asia to-day, forgetting all indebtedness to their own spiritual heritage, exhibit more and more of the same spirit of secularism that is spreading throughout the Asiatic intelligentsia. There are plenty of Europeans, as well as Americans, now active in Asia to whom these scorching words of Dr. Brunner are applicable:—

With few exceptions, the Americans themselves, travelling back and forth in the name of the government, do their full share in promoting this “metaphysical uprooting” . . . the occupation troops and many of the American advisers have strengthened the impression that modern Western civilization is atheistic, or in any case does not

care about religion in the least. I used one of my addresses, in one of the great universities of Northern Japan, to take up the fight against these imported views after several American professors had proclaimed vehemently that democracy and Christianity had nothing whatsoever to do with each other . . . not realizing that the materialistic nihilism they proclaim must, as a matter of necessity, produce in due time the totalitarian Communism, to combat which was their intention and commission . . . the West is cutting systematically the roots of what good it has and strives to maintain, while leading the East towards a rootless, purely utilitarian and technical civilization.

Diagnosis

These words, written in righteous wrath, throw a flare of light into the deeper nature of the human dilemma in this twentieth century. Conflicts between private and state capitalism, between national imperialisms, between races and even between "East and West" are all being drawn together into one struggle for world power, which threatens to become—if it is not already—the third world war. But this glimpse of Western men in the East, contributing unconsciously to the fire they are supposed to be extinguishing, reveals the abiding, underlying trouble—not indeed the cause of the other problems, but the thing that makes them insoluble. It is a kind of godlessness, at bottom a reliance upon nothing else but the human mind's own cleverness to outwit nature, even man's own nature; a spiritual disease that arose, in its modern form, from the proud confidence of Western Man in his material successes. We have seen how it leads, in social thinking, to the politics of mass and quantity which has possessed itself of the previous Russian empire. But it now spreads wherever the infection is carried from either source. Whatever hopes or fears we have of the fateful decision of the UNO to fight in Korea, this is an evil that can no more be eradicated by war than one man can cure himself of a disease by attacking another in a more advanced stage of the same illness. Nor could it be cured by the boldest action taken upon President Truman's so-

called "Fourth Point", which proposes to raise the standard of living of all backward peoples by a vast extension and speeding-up of world industrialization. That, on the contrary, would be pretty sure to spread and intensify the virus, if other things remained as they are. There is no way but to seek and cure the disease where it is, and first of all in our midst. This malady is mortal: it threatens not only Christianity, for it attacks the spiritual consciousness expressed in every religious and cultural tradition of mankind. Assuredly the germs of it are latent in the fallen nature of man. But it is the peoples who have lived and prospered in the knowledge of the Gospel who must first be cured and immunized, if the mission of the Universal Church is to be saved from the worst set-back in history.

The Defence of Man

Communism in Asia—or anywhere—is God's judgment on the Christian West. To see it in that light may help us to keep our souls balanced in the precipitous ways that loom before us. In itself Communism expresses in the highest degree the rejection of sin, the refusal to bear the guilt of oneself and of the world. (We are thinking of its professional theory and practice, not, of course, of its huge amateur following.) All evil is projected upon others, on the capitalists, imperialists, the war-mongers; the individual is sinless, free to practise every deception and violence to the end which justifies every means. In resisting communism, we are in peril of the same betrayal of God and man—of making others our scapegoats, of seeking the same spurious self-justification by arraigning others as guilty. But in reality there can be no scapegoat and no escape from responsible choice. Nor can we choose whether we will or will not join in the struggle, but only—and that to a limited degree—what is our own place in it. The conflict is proceeding on all levels of social life, physical, political, and

mental. Christians have a special calling to fight not against flesh and blood, but to deal with the enemy within the gates, i.e. to sustain and defend the spirit of man against the spiritual wickedness of the times. In Asia this may mean, according to Dr. Brunner, "a new type of approach, an interpretation of the Gospel which finds the contact with the concerns of young people and leaders in political and cultural life." Could this mean, for instance, a change of policy towards indigenous religions, some attempt to co-operate with their own spiritual leaders? No such idea may have been in the writer's mind, although to-day it would hardly be surprising if one saw Christian churches take action in defence of Buddhist communities rather than see them perish in an encroaching tide of state-aided atheism. All we can say is that there are ways which, for good or bad reasons, have never been tried; that many Christians in Asia are trying to "re-analyse their missionary task", and that no one can set limits to the means by which the living spirit of Christ will defend and further His Kingdom.

A New Class-Consciousness

The clear call is to something closer at hand. What we have called the spiritual epidemic of the age is an infection to which some men are exposed more than others. We have been shown a new class or set of classes in Japan whose members are "carriers" of this infection; but these are the rising classes in every modern state, not least in this country, where their numbers have long been increasing and our educational system is having to be enlarged and altered to accommodate them. They are really of two kinds, broadly describable as technical and administrative, and the distinction is important, for technicians as such have to converse in terms of calculable quantities and forces, whereas the administrators, dealing with human beings, can never wholly neglect moral and qualitative considerations, often as they are nowadays under pressure to think in technicians'

language. The administrators are of course no new class : their vast growth in numbers to-day is an indirect result of the transformation of the world by the work of the technicians ; but their problems are novel in form, and both classes have grown in the same general climate of thought. The attitude to life, perfectly appropriate in its place, which wants to reduce every question to a problem soluble as soon as one finds the formula, is all too easily adopted where it does not belong, and can narrow the mind where it does. The rising classes do not lack leading men with social conscience and Christian knowledge who are aware of the danger. But it is no wonder if the rank and file of classes whose prospect is so promising and progressive, are specially susceptible to philosophies and doctrines which would reduce all human and moral realities to the categories of thought that are current in their own occupation.

The Problem of Power

To have to cope with the arrival of a new power in the world is not a new predicament for Christian men ; it is their recurrent problem. In so far as we have ever had a Christian society, it was achieved by individuals and fraternities who grappled in spirit and intellect with the rising men of the new feudal order, sometimes by resisting them to the death, but in the long run it was by entering into their lives, co-operating with them until they understood their difficulties better than these men themselves. Acknowledging the new power Christians both revealed its limitations and made those who wielded it responsible. This function of Christianity is the same in respect of the unprecedented powers that have been given to man in this twentieth century. To realize this and act upon it means a great deal more than we have yet been able to attempt in our efforts to humanize industrial relations, nor can it be only a matter of educating the classes of workers most directly concerned with the new instruments of power, though all this is needed. To

domesticate the powers that have now broken loose over the world implies no less than the re-education of the spirit of Western man ; and this may well appal us as impossible, for with man it is so indeed. But is not God shaping world history around us so that men can see, if they will, his judgment upon their own designs ? Again and again it is in the light of what happens through the mortal strife of men and nations that God teaches us to re-read the Scriptures that we are so prone to wrest to our own convenience. This is a point to be remembered when the renewal of war-preparations brings, in addition to other griefs, the postponement of good works that represent our own conscious efforts at social reform. We need to recall this, too, when we are disposed to deplore the involvement of the Churches with the warring nations and that they so often seem to justify military action, as they did at Toronto. Yet the Christian truth is that it is not given to us to set up or to cast down the powers that successively arise in the world. We cannot prevent the mortal antagonisms that arise between them, nor evade the fact that, in our capacity as citizens, we have membership in them. Here also the part of Christian men is to recognize the power for what it is, to oppose any claim it makes to be what it is not, and to affirm its responsibility to higher authority. And this is what the Toronto pronouncement sought to do.

INTERIM

Frontier Luncheon

Many readers of *The Frontier* have asked to be kept in touch with Frontier activities and a number have sent in suggestions for keeping alive the wider fellowship. The Frontier Council has therefore decided to hold a luncheon in London on Wednesday, October 25th, for readers of *The Frontier* and their friends. The speaker will be Sir John Maud, K.C.B., C.B.E., Permanent Head of the Ministry of Education, who is a member of the Frontier. His subject will be "The Survival of the Person in the Planned Society". Our readers will be able to meet not only the Editors of *The Frontier*, but those who write and work for it and also members of the Frontier Council. The Editors and their advisory committee will especially welcome this opportunity of meeting face to face as many as possible of their constituents in the London area, and it is to be hoped that a way may be found later on of arranging similar luncheon meetings in the provinces. It has never been intended that the "Frontier idea" should be the monopoly of a few at the centre, and new ways of drawing together all who are concerned about the relation of Christianity to the common life and of increasing their number are constantly being sought and will be tried out wherever the facilities exist.

All subscribers in the United Kingdom will find enclosed with this issue an announcement of the luncheon with a form for the application for tickets, which are obtainable in advance on payment of 5s., from 8 The Cloisters, Windsor Castle.

The Toronto Meeting of the W.C.C.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches plans to hold its successive annual meetings in different parts of the world, so that it will not be the same members who will have to travel the longest distances on each occasion. Last summer the meeting was in Chichester. It was hoped to have next year's meeting somewhere in the Far East, but the times are unfavourable, so that it will be held somewhere in the neighbourhood of Geneva. In 1952 it is to be held in Sweden. Then in 1953 comes the Second Assembly, which it is proposed to hold in Evanston, Illinois.

This year the Central Committee met in Toronto from the 8th-15th July. It was a lively meeting. Much business of a more or less

routine nature fell to be transacted, but the keenest as well as the most prolonged debates were those in which genuine theological issues were being discussed. One discussion concerned what was at first called "the ecclesiology of the World Council". The phrase was meant to indicate that the Council represents a new form of Christian togetherness, the nature of which demands careful definition; but somebody consulted a dictionary and found that ecclesiology was there defined as "the body of knowledge which concerns the construction and decoration of church edifices"! Without for a moment conceding that this is the only recognized usage of the term, the Council did agree to issue its statement under the simpler heading of "The Church, the Churches, and the World Council". This statement is worthy of careful study. It makes clear that the Council, as actually constituted, is composed of Churches not all of whom recognize all the others to be Churches at all in the full and true sense of the word, but all of whom nevertheless know themselves to be enjoying a real measure of Christian unity with one another, and who are most anxious to preserve that unity. Such a situation gives one to think. The remark was more than once heard at Toronto that the deepest differences of thought and feeling among the Committee members often did not follow denominational lines of division at all. It was by no means always the members of the same "communion" who seemed to have most in common with one another. The Lutherans or the Anglicans or the representatives of the Reformed Churches seldom appeared as forming a "block".

This was especially true, perhaps, when the Committee came to give its attention to current questions—the problem of race relations in South Africa and elsewhere, the Christian attitude towards the war in Korea, or the Christian response towards the challenge of communism. These issues were among those most keenly debated, and the debates were on a high level of responsible thinking. But they are issues very different from those which lie at the root of our traditional denominational cleavages, and hence it is not surprising that they should give rise to something of a new alignment.

The Toronto Statement on the Korean War

The official account of the pronouncement referred to in our Notes of this month, is as follows:—

The World Council of Churches adopted a statement on the Korean war in which it commended the United Nations "for its prompt

decision to meet this aggression and for authorizing a police measure which every member nation should support ”.

“ At the same time ”, the statement stressed, “ governments must press individually and through the United Nations for a just settlement by negotiation and conciliation ”.

Declaring that “ the enforced division of a people in Korea or elsewhere is a bitter result of the divided world ”, the Central Committee added that it “ violates fundamental rights and increases the threat to peace The United Nations has attempted to establish a free, united and independent Korea within the community of nations ”, it said. “ Every opportunity which may arise from the present tragic situation must be used to gain this end ”.

The Committee stated its conviction that the Korea situation “ need not be the beginning of a general war ”. It warned that “ we must not regard world-wide conflict as inevitable ” and that “ any tendency to irresponsible fatalism should be resisted ”.

“ We stand for a just peace under the rule of law and must seek peace by expanding justice and by attempting to reconcile contending world powers ”, the committee said.

The World Council’s statement observed that post-war totalitarianism “ relies not only on military pressures, but also upon a policy of exploiting the distress of the poor, the resentments of subject peoples, discriminations on grounds of race, religion or national origin, the chaos of badly governed nations and the general disunity between nations ”.

“ The Korean attack may well be one of a possible series of thrusts at such weak points in world society. Since the world is still filled with such injustices and disorder, a mood of complacency is both wrong and politically dangerous. Overcoming these evils is therefore the most important means for rendering the world morally impregnable to totalitarian infiltration.”

REITH OF THE B.B.C.

LORD REITH'S autobiography¹ is a book that some people dislike, and that others think he ought not to have written. I have found it the most exciting and instructive of the biographies I have read in recent years.

Here, to begin with, is energy, torrential and magnificent. To be fully stretched was a necessity for John Reith's happiness. His powers had to be taxed to the limits of capacity and endurance, and those limits were in him exceptional. When, in the war, he found himself deprived of a job, he rang up a naval friend to enquire whether the Royal Navy could provide one—he did not mind what, so long as he was kept busy, and by busy he meant “about three times as much work as you can imagine anyone doing”.

When nature endowed him not only with this inexhaustible fund of energy, but added to it a powerful imagination, rare administrative ability and exceptional strength of purpose, it destined him to be one of the creative forces in the life of our time.

The B.B.C. is the monument to his creative capacity. There can seldom have been a great creative achievement, in which many participated, but in which, at the same time, it was so universally recognized that the source was a single powerful imagination and directing mind. “The form, content and influence of the broadcasting service as we know it to-day,” writes the first chief engineer of the B.B.C., “is the product of one dominant mind; it represents one man's conception of the rôle of broadcasting in a modern democracy.”

Most of what is now firmly established and taken for granted had to be won step by step by a vision which out-reached that of others, an alertness which never relaxed and a succession of bold decisions in a host of questions for the solution of which no precedents existed. The story of the unceasing battle is vividly told in Lord Reith's exciting

¹ *Into the Wind*, by J. C. W. Reith. (Hodder & Stoughton, 25s.)

pages—how the original commercial British Broadcasting Company, representing the manufacturers of wireless sets, was transformed into a public Corporation with the full consent of its directors to their own elimination ; how in its early beginnings the corporation had to meet the crisis of the general strike and to defend its independence against the desire of some members of the Cabinet that the Government should assume the control of broadcasting ; how the freedom of the B.B.C. was continuously vindicated against encroachments by the Civil Service ; how the rights of broadcasting were progressively established in face of the fears and prejudices of the powerful institution of the press ; how a successful struggle was waged to secure adequate funds to make broadcasting what it has become ; how its technical side was developed through a body of engineers who came to be recognized as the best in the world ; how the B.B.C. steadily grew “from the plaything of a few amateurs into a national institution as thoroughly representative as the Bank of England”.

When in October, 1922, John Reith answered an advertisement of the newly formed British Broadcasting Company for a general manager, he was in search of a job ; he did not know what broadcasting was. But it is doubtful whether there was among his contemporaries any one so well-equipped for the task that was given him. He had the imagination which has the power to “body forth the forms of things unknown”. There might be limits to the possibilities of broadcasting, but his eager mind refused to recognize any closed frontier. From the beginning of 1923 he envisaged the problem of the recruitment of staff in these terms :

“One had to find men and women not just good enough for the immediate responsibilities of this or that post but for what it would be some years ahead. Over the whole range of programme activities the quality of imagination was essential and vital ; a quality which is at a premium in every field. . . . It was largely by the exercise of this rare and peculiar gift that broadcasting could rise to its opportunities

and be judged. A divine discontent with what had been done ; nothing ever good enough ; something better to be ventured."

His conviction that nothing could ever be good enough he succeeded in communicating to those who worked with him. In some of the conspicuous successes of broadcasting he " had very little to do with it at all ; approved what was submitted ; occasionally made a suggestion ; stood by and watched ".

Combined with imagination and a passion for excellence was an indomitable will. He was by nature a fighter. There was no challenge that came to him that he did not at once accept ; no demand that life made on him to which he did not immediately and whole-heartedly respond.

Sir John Reith, as he was in his B.B.C. days, appeared on the scene as a man of destiny. Destiny presented him with an opportunity as colossal as was ever offered to one man with a clear field of action. He proved to be a man with the needed character to take on the job, to bear all the weight with no precedents to guide him, and never to lose the initiative. He was so clearly ahead of every one else in the reach of his imagination and in the sureness of his judgment that there was never any question of his being put in the wrong. He seemed to possess a sixth sense which enabled him to make almost unerringly swift and bold decisions in matters great and small. He had the power to convince others of their rightness in so high a degree that over and over again he would go to an interview in which the case had been more or less decided against him in advance and come away with practically everything agreed to that he wanted.

When John Reith's life-work came to him he quickly knew what he wanted to do. Broadcasting was a discovery with endless potentialities. It must be dedicated to the highest good of humanity. It must be conducted as a public service. The intellectual and ethical responsibilities of so immense a trust must be unhesitatingly accepted. " It was,

in fact," he says, "the combination of public service motive, sense of moral obligation, assured finance, and the brute force of monopoly which enabled the B.B.C. to make of broadcasting what no other country in the world has made of it—those four fundamentals." Not one of the fundamentals could be surrendered or compromised.

Moral obligation was paramount. The Director-General committed himself unhesitatingly to the view that it was the responsibility of the B.B.C. to give the public not what it wanted, or thought it wanted, but what it ought to like and, given the necessary understanding and discretion on the part of those who provided the programmes, would come to like. It was essential that, amid the prevailing confusion of values, broadcasting should be inspired by a moral purpose. It is hardly possible to over-emphasize the crucial nature of this decision. Monopoly was the necessary means by which effect could be given to it.

The question of monopoly has been recently subjected to careful examination in a book by Mr. R. H. Coase.¹ It opens up fresh aspects of a problem that has never yet been probed at a sufficiently deep level. So long as the only alternatives to the present policy are, as is commonly assumed, on the one hand, commercial broadcasting and, on the other hand, direct government control, public opinion may be expected to be solidly in favour of the proved advantages of the existing system. But this does not mean that it may not be possible, while steering clear of both these dangers, to make such changes as experience and reflection and new technical possibilities, such as very high frequency and television, show to be necessary. Nor need it be assumed that Lord Reith himself would be opposed to an evolution, so long as broadcasting continues to be ruled by the motive of public service and the sense of moral obligation. What the nation owes to him is that, having had placed in his hands a new invention with incalculable possibilities for good or evil, he

¹ *British Broadcasting. A Study in Monopoly*, by R. H. Coase. (Longmans, 12s. 6d.)

should have seen clearly what was at stake, taken his decision, and succeeded in convincing almost all influential sections of public opinion of the rightness of his policy. "It may be asked", says Mr. Coase, "why I ascribe such a dominant influence to Mr. Reith in forming opinion on this question. My reason is simple. I can see no other explanation. Nor, to my knowledge, has anyone else who has made a serious study of the question."

That is the first reason why I find *Into the Wind* so exhilarating—that it is the vividly told story of a great historical achievement. But for Christian readers there is a further absorbing interest in the fact that Lord Reith approached his task with definite Christian convictions. He does not hide this; it crops out everywhere in the volume. He says of himself in the days before he entered on his main task: "I had strong religious convictions; certain that only a practical application of Christian principle in affairs national and international could ever bring peace and prosperity to the world." In October, 1922, he heard a sermon on the text, "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land." He responded inwardly to the call, noting in his diary "I still believe there is some great work for me to do in the world". A few days later he read and answered the advertisement of the British Broadcasting Company for a general manager. When the post had been offered and accepted, he wrote on his way to take up the appointment, "My father's last words were vividly in mind: *Without Me ye can do nothing.*" His Christian belief was not merely a department of his life, but a mainspring of action. What he saw in broadcasting, and what he tried to realize in it had their deepest sources in his Christian experience.

While greatness in this world is by no means the same thing as greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven, great human capacity is far from being something negligible. What the German Christian philosopher Theodor Haecker has said about fame might with equal truth be said about genius.

"The fame of this world vanishes like smoke. That is true enough. But this too must be realized, and made real. That is to say, a man must acquire and possess this fame and *then* recognize that it is nothing and leaves the soul empty. Only then is the saying true." To display its full range the Christian life has to be lived not only in lowly and sheltered surroundings, but in the thick of human conflicts, where men play for the highest stakes.

What gives to Lord Reith's life from the Christian standpoint an exceptional interest is that it has been an exposed life. It has been lived at the centre of one of the chief battlefields of our time. In his struggle to guide the development of broadcasting and to give meaning and reality to the conception of the public corporation he has had to wrestle with the fundamental problem of modern government—how to combat the powerful forces which threaten the disruption of present-day society and to encourage advance towards the good without succumbing to the dangers and evils of the totalitarian state.

A third quality which gives to the book a poignant interest is that it contains an element of tragedy, in the sense not of overwhelming calamity but of frustration, disappointment and unfulfilled promise. It brings vividly to our attention the problems that arise from the tragic element in human life. The story unfolded is one not only of conspicuous success but also of apparent failure. One of the main motives of the book is to diagnose and assess the causes of that failure. The search is pursued with remarkable detachment; the subject of the study is "someone the writer used to know".

The sense of failure is twofold. In the first place, in regard to the B.B.C. itself, it seemed to Lord Reith in 1947, when he was writing his book, that much of what he had stood for had been disregarded and set aside, and that all that he had won by his labours and struggles was a Pyrrhic victory. That, surely, is too pessimistic a judgment. The enormous expansion of overseas broadcasting in nearly fifty

languages, the initiation of the European service, the addition of the third programme, the introduction of controversial religious discussions are highly significant developments that could not have come about without the foundations laid by Lord Reith. In any case, no change of direction, since he was Director-General or in the future, can diminish the magnitude of what he achieved.

The deeper sense of failure relates to his career after leaving the B.B.C. Why did he leave it? It seems to him in retrospect "stupendous folly to have left one of the most responsible and rewarding posts in all the world". In 1937 he was increasingly "unsettled and restive—for the single and simple reason that there was not enough to do". He had organized the B.B.C. so efficiently, and had communicated to his colleagues so much of his own outlook and standards, that it could be run with little attention from him. Was he right in seeking some other field for the exercise of his powers? Had he in fifteen years given in the main what he had to give, and was it better that others should now in their turn contribute their distinctive gifts to the making of the B.B.C.? Or did it still need, more particularly in the critical times ahead, what he, and perhaps he alone, could have given by the mere fact of his being there?

When he was asked by the Prime Minister to become the Director of Imperial Airways, his sense of public duty wrung from him an unwilling consent. Soon after the war broke out he was called to the Ministry of Information, but was dropped when a new Government was formed. He was offered the Ministry of Transport, which he held for five months, when he was transferred to the Ministry of Works and Building, which he held from 1940-2. During this period he mobilized the building industry and brought town and country planning on to the map. Having had to relinquish his office as the result of party manoeuvres, he found himself out of a job and joined the Navy as a Lieutenant-Commander, to become in the end Director of Combined

Operations Material, and was in charge of the material and technical preparations for the landings in Normandy. His career since he left the B.B.C. includes achievements which would in the lives of most men constitute a distinguished record. But in none of these jobs did he find himself fully stretched, and to a man of his disposition this was torment. He was assured by one who held high public office that "there must be *very* great tasks waiting for you when the moment comes". But the moment has never come.

It has been said that people found him difficult to work with. There is a sense in which some people will always find a man of his quick mind and untiring energy difficult. Mr. Churchill, for similar reasons, was kept out of the Cabinet for many years. Mr. J. H. Whitley, a former Speaker of the House of Commons, when he was Chairman of the Board of Governors of the B.B.C., said to Reith that he had always regarded himself as having an exceptionally quick mind, but that Reith's mind worked twice as fast as his own.

But it is certainly not true that Lord Reith was found difficult by those who understood him. His relations with Mr. Whitley during the three and a half years of their association were without a jar. The latter wrote that "of all the jobs that have come to me in the course of a varied life, this last one has given me the most unalloyed pleasure"; and on another occasion, that "he is one of those strong men with whom it is a delight to work". Vice-admiral Sir Thomas Tower wrote to him about his work in Combined Operations, "You know I have never ceased to be amazed at the way you handled both people and affairs." Abundant further evidence could be quoted of a similar kind.

One thing that stands out clearly from Lord Reith's experience of ministerial posts is the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of a man succeeding in political life without party backing. Two things, moreover, made public life trying to a man of Lord Reith's outlook and temperament.

One was the tempo of public action. A mess or muddle which he knew could be cleared up he found intolerable. The slow working of government machinery was a trial to his patience. In the second place, for a man with his far-sighted conception of public good and disinterested determination to achieve it, it was hard to put up with the host of people who were less concerned about the end than about the place which they or their department or their interests would have in it.

No account of events by one who took part in them can escape being a presentation of them from an individual standpoint. Our conscious life we can analyse and dissect, as Lord Reith with scrupulous honesty scrutinizes his own life in this volume. But the unconscious part of ourselves we can know, if at all, only through the re-actions which we provoke in others. There are doubtless factors to which insufficient weight is given in this narrative. It may well be that Lord Reith, with his quick-working mind, was at times so convinced of the truth of his own view that he failed to see that another view was possible.

But when the fullest allowance is made for this, the question remains whether the causes of his frustration may not have lain, not so much in himself, as in others. It may be that his fellow-countrymen failed to perceive what was in him. Destiny gave to England in its hour of crisis a leader of superlative quality. Perhaps it offered other gifts which went unrecognized. The linking of Lord Reith's name with that of Winston Churchill is not fanciful or arbitrary. The story concludes with two letters in which the former writes to Churchill, "You could have used me in a way and to an extent you never realized," and Churchill replies, "My task in making appointments in a Coalition Government was hard, and I have no doubt that under the extreme pressure of war events I often made mistakes. . . . I am very sorry that the fortunes of war should have proved so adverse to you, and I feel the State is in your debt."

Lord Reith's life-story forces on our attention the pressing question whether the conditions of modern democracy provide sufficient scope for the energies of creative individuals. In war time the need for these qualities is obvious, and it is Lord Reith's misfortune, and his country's serious loss, that in the war, and particularly in planning for the post-war period, his gifts were denied their fullest exercise. But the qualities of creative imagination, fearless acceptance of responsibility, bold decision and powerful initiative are no less necessary for human progress in times of peace. If institutions, machinery and inertia are allowed to suppress or impede creative individuality, democracy will be deprived of the adventurous leadership which is indispensable for growth and will fall into lethargy and decline.

The final note of Lord Reith's book, however, is not, as it could not be for a Christian, one of frustration and despair. He knows that the last word about success or failure is not spoken in this life. In his moving *Post-scriptum* he looks forward to the day when "the mists of conditioned perceptions are cleared away" and we shall "know as we now are known". Because his anchorage is in a world beyond time he can view with a measure of detachment and peace the tempestuous course of his career. Whatever judgment we may pass on any particular attitude or action, his life as a whole is a notable contemporary example of a life rooted in a world beyond the present and drawing its inspiration and support from that source and, for that reason, lived fearlessly and strenuously amid the conflicts, exigencies and perplexities of time.

J. H. OLDHAM.

BARTH AS A EUROPEAN

BARTH'S attitude toward European culture is defined most fully in one of his books, as yet untranslated into English, and published under the title, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19ten Jahrhundert*. The title is somewhat ill-chosen. For about half the book deals with the eighteenth century. And, with the exception of a long and eulogistic essay on Schleiermacher, its most interesting sections deal with men like Mozart, Rousseau and Kant, who weren't Protestant theologians at all. One of the most fascinating features of the book is a quite general essay on the eighteenth century, that period when the Renaissance got into its swing again, after having been interrupted by the wars of religion. Barth, when he gets down to analysis of eighteenth century man, finds his most marked characteristic to be confidence in his own powers. This characteristic Barth finds exemplified in eighteenth-century music, with its fondness for instruments like organ and the piano, its confidence that the whole chaos of sound can be reduced by the Künstler—the man who can—to the ordered laws of the fugue, its delight in sheer playing, a reflection of the freedom which it has achieved by its conquest of the world of sound. The same theme dominates the politics and the philosophy of the time. The documents of the American and French Revolutions breathe this spirit as much as does the government of any eighteenth-century absolute monarch. For the so-called natural rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness simply express the will of Absolute man, of the man, that is, who treats his desires to live, to do what he likes, and to have a good time as ultimates. And the Bible and the Christian dogmas came under the fire of rationalist criticism, not so much because they conflicted with the new scientific discoveries—with which so great a figure as Leibniz was able to reconcile them—as because they presented man with an authority outside himself to which he had to be subject.

Now Barth's theological position, that, in the last resort, man cannot save himself but must be saved by God, and that God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is the only final authority, is, of course, incompatible with this attitude of self-confidence which he takes to be characteristic of the eighteenth century and of Humanism generally. At least, it is, if the latter is taken as an ultimate standpoint. But simply to contrast Barth's standpoint with the Humanist one is to do scant justice to the complex relation in which they stand to one another. For one thing, his belief that the Word of God is to be found in Scripture has never brought Barth near the adoption of the position that it is therefore unnecessary to read other books, on the ground that they either contain what is in the Bible, in which case they are superfluous, or else they don't, in which case they are false. On the contrary, it is impossible to read the work which I have mentioned without realizing that Barth is steeped in European culture. Where his theological position affects his attitude toward it is, I think, in two ways. In the first place, it makes him favour, among the great figures of European culture, those like Mozart and Kant, who, though themselves masters, recognized the limits of human capacity. Secondly—and perhaps paradoxically—just because Barth does not recognize the standpoint of European Humanism as ultimate, he does not judge the representatives of its various tendencies as harshly as they judge one another. He is like an ambassador accredited to a foreign though friendly country who, just because he is not mixed up in its domestic affairs, judges its politicians more charitably than they judge one another. That comes out in his assessment of Rousseau. It is easy to treat Rousseau as a psychological case. But Barth, while admitting that in the later years Rousseau was a sick man mentally, refuses to accept a psychological interpretation as ultimate. He insists that there was an objective basis for Rousseau's persecution mania to the extent that his age was against him and understandably so. For in the tragi-comedy of his life we can see the birth pangs of a new

age, the age of Goethe. Barth does not consider a moralistic approach to Rousseau the last word either. In contrast to Lord Morley, who, in his study of Rousseau's portrait, talked of a "profound moral defeat . . . unenlightened by the memories of resolute conflict with evil and weakness", Barth writes these words: "When we understand what Rousseau appears never to have understood, that one can only live by forgiveness, we no longer have any interest in making the point—which is only too easy to make—that this man was a quite special sinner. No one enjoins us to follow in his steps and it would indeed be inadvisable to do so. So much the less can we be expected to cast a stone at him."

But perhaps the most important feature of Barth's assessment of the Humanistic standpoint is that, while for him that standpoint cannot be man's final reaction to the Universe it has, within its limits, a place that is both justifiable and necessary. Here a speech which he made in 1948 at a youth gathering in Hungary is significant. In this speech he warned his hearers against three things, a flight into technology, with its consequent escape from political responsibility, a surrender to authoritarianism in any form, and an acceptance of the extremer varieties of Existentialism. He then went on to give his positive counsel to them in the words of Kant, "Have the courage to use your own understanding!" Now these, as Barth well knew, are the very words in which Kant chose to express what he considered to be the spirit of the *Aufklärung*, the Enlightenment. That Barth should use them on such an occasion—and incidentally they were greeted with a storm of applause—is, I think, conclusive proof that, while in his eyes the standpoint of Humanism cannot be the final one, yet within its limits, limits perceived however dimly by men like Mozart and Kant, its outlook is a justifiable one and one which Europeans to-day neglect at their peril.

It was in the winter semester of 1932-33, when Barth, then Professor of Theology at Bonn, was lecturing on

Rousseau, that Hitler came to power. Since then Barth has been concerned with the great European events of our lifetime and his activity can be divided roughly into three phases. In the first, his attention was concentrated on what was going on within the German Evangelical Church. Within that body, the Nazis had a not inconsiderable Fifth Column, the so-called German Christians, whose aim was to alter the Christian message to fit the racial doctrines of the new movement. Barth set his energies to combat that perversion of Christianity. We in this country may not care for his rejection of Natural Theology. But in fairness we must remember that his insistence that outside Jesus Christ there is no revelation of God, is an index of the vehemence of his opposition to the many thousands who, in the Germany of that time, believed that there was a God and that He was revealed to them in Adolf Hitler.

A second phase might be said to begin when Barth, now expelled from Bonn and lecturing at Basel, just across the Swiss frontier, produced "*Rechtfertigung und Recht*", which was first given in lecture form in June 1938. For in this essay we have the basis of an attack on Nazism as a political system and not merely on the religious heresy which it had occasioned within the church. One might describe the essay by saying that in it Barth attempts to prove a conclusion repugnant to German Lutherans by means of premisses which are almost equally uncongenial to Anglo-Saxon Christians. For he inculcates political activism by means of arguments drawn entirely from the New Testament.

This approach was inevitable. For Barth, seeking to define the Christian's relation to the just state, could not derive the authority of the just state from the consent of the governed. That would be to treat as absolute the wills of men. The authority that the just state possesses must come from the one source of authority, the God who is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. And Dr. Brunner's not unattractive suggestion that since God created us with the three basic

needs for sexual companionship, food and security, He can therefore be said to have ordained the institutions of marriage, the economic order and the state, within which these needs find satisfaction, is one which does not appeal to Barth. The source of the authority of the just state is not to be found in God the Creator apart from God the Redeemer. The result is that in the political sphere there is, for Barth, no absolute segregation between the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace. The functions of church and state are different, but all church members, simply in virtue of being Christians, have certain duties toward the state binding upon them.

These duties, Barth considers, are summarized in the passage in 1st Timothy, where Christians are enjoined to pray for kings and for all in authority. But to understand the implications of Barth's position it is necessary to note his views, first on why such prayer is to be offered and second, on what it involves.

The reason for such a prayer is, according to the epistle, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto a knowledge of the truth". It is the last words which count with Barth. A Christian is to seek for a quiet and peaceable life, not for the personal comfort which it involves, but because it is the kind of life in which he can get on with the task entrusted to him by God, the proclamation of Jesus Christ to all men. The proclamation, enjoined by God, is possible only in the just state. Secondly, Barth said, at the close of the original essay, that where this proclamation is possible, and where freedom to carry it out is made use of by the right church in the right way, there there is the guarantee of all the other rights of the just state and of the collapse of Bolshevism on the one hand and Fascism on the other.

It follows that Christians, as Christians, must pray for the just state and for its victory over the unjust state. But Barth

adds the significant words, "in the long run there can be no earnest prayer without the work that matches the prayer."

The Christian must not only pray for the just state, he must also work, fight and suffer for it. His criticism of our Anglo-Saxon Pelagianism must not blind us to the fact that Barth is essentially an activist. That is the theological basis for his wartime record, for his service with the Swiss Home Guard when he was over fifty, for his heartening messages to us and to the French in the dark days of 1940 and 1941, for his prompt and public rebuke of any of his fellow-Swiss who in the difficult period of encirclement allowed themselves to be infected by Axis ideology.

The third and post-war phase of Barth's political activity is more difficult to interpret. Just before Munich he said, "Every Czech soldier who fights and suffers will do so . . . for the church of Jesus Christ, which in the atmosphere of Hitler or Mussolini can only fall victim to ridicule or extermination." But preaching in Bern Cathedral in February 1949, he said, "The cause of the West may on natural grounds be our cause but it is not the cause of God any more than the cause of the East is." In other words, in 1938, the issue was the issue of the just state versus the unjust, whereas in 1949 it is not. Is the situation all that different, or is Barth inconsistent?

I think both these alternatives are true. Barth has a case when he maintains that the situation is different. His remarks that a condemnation of Communism (which he as an individual personally is quite willing to give) would cost him little, whereas his condemnation of Hitler cost a lot, and that the very people who demand the former from him, objected to the latter, while natural are, I should say, irrelevant. They represent a harking back to Kierkegaard's view that the crowd is untruth, a standpoint from which Barth claimed to have emancipated himself a considerable time ago. When he first raised the matter of the just state in 1938, he dealt with it, not by a kind of inverted Gallup poll but by putting forward a quite objective criterion of such a state,

namely, freedom to proclaim the gospel. Now Barth has a case for maintaining that application of this criterion gives a different result from ten years ago. The Hungarian Reformed Church has impressed him as having the marks of being the right kind of church. It would never itself have recourse to persecution or force and so it is not a church which confuses itself with the state. It is not being corrupted by any heresy from within—paradoxically Barth finds in the avowedly atheistical nature of Communism a guarantee that, unlike Nazism, it will be unable to pervert the church from within. Though the church of an ex-enemy country, it shows no sign of self-pity and has disavowed the excesses of past nationalism. And in its dealings with Communism it has shown *Mut*, nerve, a factor which counts a good deal with Barth, whose own refusal to be unduly impressed with a totalitarian state even when carrying on a successful blitzkrieg a few thousand yards from his front door, links up with his acceptance of the New Testament position that the demonic state is only one of those powers and principalities that will be subdued by Christ and even now cannot separate us from the love of God. Now this church does consider that in spite of difficulties, it has in the present Hungarian state freedom to proclaim the gospel. On the other hand, Barth doubts whether the Protestant church in Spain has any such freedom. These two factors in themselves suffice to justify Barth in his refusal to equate the issue between East and West with the issue between the unjust and the just state, if he applies his original criterion of the just state.

But does he? Would he stand by what he said in 1938 and maintain that freedom to proclaim the gospel in Hungary to-day has meant, or will mean, the collapse of Bolshevism? It is significant that when in Budapest in April 1948 he was asked what he meant by the just state, he did not mention its connection with freedom to proclaim the gospel but went on to define it in terms of a state of equilibrium between the elements of order, freedom, fellowship, power and responsibility. I do not think he considers that

such an equilibrium exists in the Hungary of to-day. If that is the case, then his views have changed. Why, I do not know. But I close with what is only a conjecture which has nothing to do with his theology. Is one reason why Barth is profoundly dissatisfied with this issue between East and West, his disquiet at a factor in it which he has only noted in his Bern sermon but which must inevitably concern one who has always been a good European. I mean the fact that for the first time for many hundred years, the destinies of Europeans are being decided by men who live outside Europe.

IAN HENDERSON.

A NEW COMMUNITY

A FEW miles from Cluny in the Saône-et-Loire region of mid-Eastern France overlooking a peaceful plain is the little hillside village of Taizé. For many years this village had been abandoned by peasants, who sought a more profitable living elsewhere. To-day Taizé is the scene of an interesting venture in simple living in Christian community. The first Reformed Church community of Brothers (*Communauté de Taizé-les-Cluny*) has been established there. In six years they have restored the fine old twelfth-century church, made habitable delapidated cottages and rebuilt roads. They have also a home for destitute boys, which is a real home, not an "institution".

Here is the story of how the community has been making its way during those difficult years when faith triumphed over obstacles. The story really begins in 1940 when France was occupied by the Germans. Refugees, Jews and others, were fleeing for safety from Nazi tyranny. Roger Schütz, a young pastor of the Swiss Reformed Church, had a definite call to go to France and aid them. Taizé was sufficiently off the beaten track—and just inside the unoccupied zone—to be a useful place of refuge. Schütz went to Taizé and secured for this purpose the charming little château, a

gracious old country house with gardens and a farm attached.

For two years Schütz ran this centre single-handed, receiving and caring for the needs, material and spiritual, of refugee youths who had fled across the demarcation line from the zone of France occupied by the Germans. In 1942, however, the Germans brought pressure to bear upon the Vichy authorities and the demarcation line was abolished. Taizé could no longer be a refuge from oppression. Schütz had to close the castle and return to Switzerland.

During the next two years he lived in an apartment adjoining the Protestant cathedral of St. Peter's in Geneva. There he was joined by Max Thurian, the theologian, and Pierre Souvairan, who had specialist experience in agriculture, and together they began the first Reformed Church Community for Men. There were already Protestant Communities at Grandchamp, Présinge and Pomeyrol, but those were for women's vocations.

With the liberation of France in 1944 Schütz, Thurian, and Souvairan went to Taizé to start community life there. They found the château in a deplorable state; no furniture, no water and no light. The three Brothers did all the household chores, became masons, joiners, and electricians in turn as they renovated the premises. Christian friends outside helped to provide furniture.

To-day, at the Community of Taizé near Cluny, there are seven Brothers, while five others are going through the period of novitiate. The spirit of simplicity which marked the Jansenist Order of Port Royal has inspired their way of living but the Community firmly maintains the faith of the Reformed Church. The work of the various Brothers indicates a variety of vocations. Roger Schütz has charge of the parish in the neighbouring town of Macon. Max Thurian conducts the theological studies of the Community. Pierre Souvairan supervises the work on the farm. Robert Giscard is a doctor and has a surgery in the village where he treats patients who come from miles around. Daniel de

Monmollin is a poet. Eric de Saussure, a young painter, has designed decorations for the village church and has illustrated books issued by the Community. When funds are available for a kiln it is hoped to start a pottery for the production of beautiful and serviceable ware which it will be a pleasure to buy.

The engagements taken by the Brothers for life-long admission to the Community include renunciation of property, to live in unity of service, and consecration to Jesus Christ. Celibacy is one of the engagements. Another calls for willingness "to discern Christ among their brothers and to watch over them both in good and in bad days, in abundance and in poverty, in suffering and in joy". This significantly recalls the promise of life-long fidelity made in the wedding service of the Reformed Church. It is significant not least because monastic life has sometimes been falsely presented as a selfish withdrawal from the cares and obligations of the world in order to cultivate a private "spirituality". Protestants have sometimes been apt to assume that marriage is inevitably the social norm for all good citizens and that celibacy is therefore abnormal. By establishing a vocation for celibacy in community of Christian service to the world, honour is thereby paid also to marriage and parenthood as a spiritual vocation.

There are no vows of perpetual silence at the Community of Taizé, but the spirit of "interior silence" is there, reflected by quiet periods at meal times. It is an opportunity to be quiet and listen, not only at church, to the voice of God. It is a source of strength against the moralistic urge to be always "busy" doing good to others, which sometimes turns social service in the world into organization for organization's sake, without regard for the real needs of others. "Interior silence" does not mean sealed lips or a mournful expression during the rest of the active daily life at Taizé.

The Brothers have established on modest lines "La Cité des Gosses" (Boys' Town) for youngsters who are orphans

or who need care which unworthy parents are unable to give. Aged from four to nineteen years, they have been adopted for life by the Brothers, who make a human family for them. Two cheerful women, Geneviève Schütz, sister of Pastor Schütz, and Renée Schmutz, have their hands full looking after the high spirited younger boys. One of the cottages serves as their dormitory. Another has been converted into a village school where a married friend of the Community teaches them and some local children. Older boys who work in the neighbourhood return to Taizé to join in the social life there. The youngsters absorb the spirit of Christian community life in the most natural way.

The Brothers plan gradually to rebuild the delapidated old manor house and grounds in order to provide better accommodation for these growing youngsters. But funds are needed to enable such expansion. Some of the produce from the farm is marketed, but this serves only to cover costs of such food as cannot be locally grown. A considerable outlay is required for repairing premises which have been so long left to decay.

Some of the cottages have been sufficiently repaired to accommodate summer visitors, who come to Taizé to attend ecumenical retreats. In this friendly atmosphere of intimate candour, people from the most varied Churches meet and discuss problems of Christian reconciliation and join in the worship of God with the Brothers.

It was Christmastime when I visited Taizé. There are two main "offices" of worship during the day, at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. When the bell sounded the Brothers slipped white hooded robes, expression of praise to God, over their working clothes and proceeded to the village Church. It was aglow with candle-light and adorned for the occasion with a Nativity painting and tableau designed in simple good taste for the joy of young and old alike. We sang intercessions, hymns and psalms of praise. We stood in a circle to receive the Holy Communion. Then the Brothers returned across the farmyard to their daily work.

BERNARD CAUSTON.

REVIEWS

Disagreements, A Polemic on Culture in the English Democracy, by R. C. CHURCHILL. (Secker and Warburg. 12. 6d.).

Mr. Churchill is a very English Englishman, of stout Puritan stock, educated at a county grammar school and then somewhere under the influence of Dr. and Mrs. Leavis of the English school at Cambridge. He has become of late years a propagandist for the Rationalist Press Association, in whose service he has written two very effective pamphlets on *English Literature and the Agnostic, Art and Christianity*. In this larger book he is concerned not only with the advocates of Christian culture, but with Marxists, admirers of country houses, and agrarian reformers of the school of Mr. H. J. Massingham.

His treatment of the Marxist diagnosis is entertaining. He makes a good case for the view that most English Marxists, and indeed physical-force revolutionaries, are children of the upper classes, troubled with a social conscience in the monastic seclusion of the playing-fields of Eton, where they discuss Capital in the prefects' room without any understanding of the real condition of the English worker. But in his insistence on the bourgeois virtues of the English working-man, who is still more keen on his garden than on the cinema or the dog-track, he seems to me to miss the element of truth that is common to Marx and Massingham. Marx was right against the reformist radicals, who (I agree) were much pleasanter characters, when he pointed out the fundamental difference between the "lower orders" of craftsmen and peasants with a stake, however small, in their own land, their shop and their tools, and the new proletariat of town and country workers wholly dependent upon wages. Mr. Churchill rightly recalls our attention to the medical reasons for the rise in population before as well as after the Industrial revolution. But I think he is wrong in supposing that a society of small owners would have increased as rapidly as a society of wage-earners, whose children's earnings (or relief) made up the narrow margin of the family income.

Mr. Churchill deplores a general decline in cultural standards, the power of advertisements, "the impersonal machine culture of our time . . . of the cinema, of publicity, of the cheap novel". But he denies any necessary connexion between this and industrialism or the increase in rational criticism of religious beliefs. He objects to being told by Christian writers that he is at one and the same time living upon his Christian capital, and completely cut off from his religious

roots. He points out that the charges cannot both be true at the same time. A great deal of Christian sentiment has in fact survived the decay of Christian belief and is likely to be incorporated in the next phase of human thinking, as pre-Christian sentiment and custom was incorporated in the Mediaeval Christian culture. In his sincere attachment to Christian sentiment Mr. Churchill naturally resents its debasement in the proposals of the Church Assembly's Commission on Evangelism, for advertising religion. He is also very hostile to the B.B.C.'s religious department for their part in producing *The Man Born to be King*, though he evidently respects the professional competence of Miss Sayers. His resentment should be considered in the light of his opinion that 70 per cent of the population of England are neither worshipping Christians nor agnostics. They have not yet come enough under conscious rationalist influence to reject belief with any decision. Their attitude to Christianity is a sentimental one.

Mr. Churchill is not himself a sentimentalist, though he has a softer spot for sentiment than Dr. and Mrs. Leavis. He rejects Christianity because his knowledge of the Bible, with which he is quite evidently intimate—Biblical language seems to be part of the whole structure of his thinking—leads him to think that Christ predicted the end of the world between 60 and 80 A.D., and because he has a poor opinion of the record of the Mediaeval church. What surprises me is that he should fail to perceive the cultural dangers of a sentimental attachment to Christianity which hasn't arrived at any serious estimate either of the New Testament or of the church as an historical institution. Christian writers and preachers may be tactless, even foolish, in some of the means they use to bring that sentiment to a decision, but until it is integrated in *some* rational world-view it seems to me that the great mass of English men and women, unsure of their spiritual as of their economic status and future, are in a dangerously instable situation.

GEORGE EVERY, S.S.M.

Introduction to Kierkegaard. By REGIS JOLIVET. Translated by W. H. BARBER. (Frederick Muller. 15s.)

M. Jolivet is Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Lyon. His book is probably the best general evaluation of the Danish author's life and work that we have had. Its insight is equal to its learning, and it is admirably written. The brief conclusion defines Kierkegaard's singular position as one of suspense between those of Lutheranism and Catholicism. The work is very well translated.

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